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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Draft report

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Chapter I
Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

1. Indigenous peoples of North America (Turtle Island) are found within all states of the United States of America and within all provinces and territories of Canada. Despite the fact that indigenous peoples live in developed and democratic first-world countries, the violation of their human rights affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples — specifically, the right to self-determination and the right to development with culture and identity based on indigenous world views — has caused them to experience many critical socio-economic problems: lack of employment, lack of access to clean water, physical and social isolation, substandard housing, critical health issues, high teenage suicide rates, violence against women, alcohol and substance abuse, and high rates of crime and incarceration. For example, the arrest and incarceration rates among indigenous peoples are nearly four times higher than the national average. All these factors contribute to the social dislocation of indigenous peoples and their alienation from both their ancestral lands and North American society in general.

2. The Permanent Forum urges the Governments of Canada and the United States to work in good faith with indigenous peoples for the unqualified endorsement and full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and urges that such endorsement and implementation honour the spirit and intent of the Declaration, consistent with indigenous peoples' human rights.

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3. The Permanent Forum encourages United Nations agencies and other bodies to offer training programmes for Canadian and national parliamentarians and United States members of Congress, and staff within national institutions such as human rights commissions and other agencies, with the aim of integrating the spirit and intent of the Declaration into national policies.

4. The Permanent Forum encourages the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Human Rights Council to continue the process of addressing rights related to treaties and agreements between indigenous peoples and the United States and Canada, including through the consideration and implementation of the recommendations resulting from the first two United Nations treaty seminars, held in 2003 and 2006, and by taking steps to hold a third seminar, as mandated by the Economic and Social Council, and urges the Expert Mechanism to advance the work on treaties.

5. Given the fact that the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women, as well as other forms of violence, including trafficking and domestic violence, has gained increasing public attention in Canada, the Permanent Forum urges the Government of Canada to provide more emergency shelters serving indigenous women, as well as better victim services, and specific programmes to assist indigenous women who have been trafficked.

6. The Permanent Forum welcomes the decision of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people to monitor violence against indigenous women and girls in Canada, including missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, in accordance with his mandate. Furthermore, the Permanent Forum requests that the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, as well as the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, address the situation of violence against indigenous women in the United States as well.

7. The Permanent Forum urges the Governments of Canada and the United States to respect the right of indigenous nations to determine their own membership, in accordance with article 33 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

8. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Governments of Canada and the United States address the border issues related to the Mohawk Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy by taking effective measures to implement article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that indigenous peoples divided by international borders have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.

9. The Permanent Forum urges the Government of Canada to work with the Friendship Centre Movement and other relevant organizations to determine how it can strengthen its roles and responsibilities with regard to urban aboriginal peoples.

10. The Permanent Forum urges the Governments of Canada and the United States to eliminate all assimilation policies that further exacerbate the economic and other disparities between indigenous peoples and the rest of the population.

11. The Permanent Forum urges the Governments of Canada and the United States to financially support indigenous community education systems and their efforts to protect and perpetuate indigenous languages, on a par with their dominant languages.